

Nebraska Office of Highway Safety (NOHS)
Nebraska Child Safety Seat Inspection Station
Application Information

Background

The effectiveness of safety belts and child safety seats in preventing injury and death in motor vehicles is well established. Overall nonuse of safety belts in Nebraska is approximately 16%, according to the 2011 statewide observational survey. Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children ages 1 to 14 in Nebraska. According to the 2011 Nebraska Child Safety Seat Observation Survey, 4.9% of children 0-5 years old ride unrestrained, placing them at more than twice the risk of death and injury as those riding restrained.

It is estimated that a large percentage of children who are placed in child safety seats in Nebraska are improperly restrained. With the increasing numbers and types of vehicles on the road, coupled with the increasing numbers and types of child restraints on the market, choosing the correct seat has become a difficult and confusing task for parents/caregivers. Furthermore, adult safety belts do not adequately protect children ages 4 to 8 (about 40 to 80 pounds) from injury in a crash. Although booster seats are the best way to protect these children, nationally only 6% of booster-age children ride properly restrained in booster seats.

Lack of access to affordable child safety seats and booster seats contributes to a lower usage rate among low-income families. However, research shows that 95 percent of low-income families who own a child safety seat use it. Improving access to affordable child restraint systems and educating parents and caregivers about proper installation and use are key components of improving use rates.

Definition of an Inspection Station

An "Inspection Station" is a designated place where people can obtain educational information and assistance in choosing the correct child restraint system, how to properly install it, as well as how to properly secure their child into that seat. Inspection stations are available to the entire community and operate as a public service.

Successful Inspection Stations have permanent locations with regular/set days and hours of operation. It is important to keep the time commitment expectations from staff reasonable to avoid burnout. You can always expand the days and hours of operation as your program grows. Before submitting your application you should determine how you will let the public know about your services. It is recommended that an inspection station function on an appointment-based vs. drop in format. Monthly activity logs documenting the number of clients served, seats distributed, and other information must be submitted to the NOHS monthly.

The "Operation of Inspection Stations for Child Restraint Use" located at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/InspectionStations/ is an excellent resource.

Stationary sites: A fixed site where parents and caregivers can go to have their child's safety seat inspected. These sites can be established indoors or outdoors. An indoor setting (i.e., drive-through bay) is often preferred because it is not affected by the weather. Ideally the vehicles will enter in one side of the facility and exit out the other side to avoid having vehicles operating in reverse, endangering others. However, any indoor setting can be utilized for a stationary site.

Keep in mind that the storage of seats requires a large area and it is best to store seats on-site when possible.

Mobile sites: In some communities, a more effective way to provide parents/caregivers with service is a mobile system; traveling on a scheduled basis to designated locations where the inspection station is set up and inspections performed. Mobile sites are required to host an inspection event a minimum of once per quarter (every 3 months).

Using National SAFE KIDS checklist forms, the inspection station personnel document what they find when the vehicle arrives at the inspection station. They inspect the child restraint for recalls, note obvious errors, obtain a history of the seat, and check to see that the child seat is correct for the size, weight, and age of the child. Inspection stations are not an "installation service." Certified child passenger safety technicians inspect the safety seats and discuss and demonstrate proper installation techniques, teaching parents/caregivers how to properly install child safety seats in their vehicles. Once educated, the caregiver then installs the child safety seat in the automobile, and secures the child in the safety seat. Lastly, the technician inspects the parent/caregivers installation.

Inspection stations have a variety of child restraint systems available to assure that no child leaves the inspection station in an unsafe manner. Seats obtained through the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety are only to be distributed to low-income parents/caregivers, when the child is present, or when the woman is pregnant. Voluntary donations for seats obtained through the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety may be accepted to offset costs of future seats or other child passenger safety related expenses (i.e., manufacturer's instructions, water noodles). Federal regulations require that seats not be distributed to for-profit businesses such as daycares. Nebraska Child Safety Seat Inspection Stations are required to maintain and utilize low-income guidelines. Partnering with an agency that currently determines income eligibility may be beneficial. If donations are accepted, a separate account should be established for the donations received.

Staffing the Inspection Station

While clearly the most critical positions at an inspection station are the child safety seat technicians performing the actual seat check, other duties and responsibilities are very important and must be handled efficiently and professionally. In a perfect world, all the components of a successful inspection station would be handled by different people, however, in most cases; one person may have to fill several roles.

Administrative Coordinator - A point person that handles the administrative needs of an inspection station. This person is responsible for receiving phone calls from parents, scheduling appointments for inspections, asking parents to bring in instruction books, securing technicians, ordering supplies, handling the data accumulated from the inspection forms, filing the inspection forms, ordering handouts, copying the most recent Recall list for use during inspections.

Greeter - The greeter may provide traffic control, explain the inspection process to the parent/caregiver, provide the inspection form and educational handouts to parents, and help to ensure an overall smooth operation.

Scribes/Recorders - This person gathers data from the driver, records information found by the inspector and checks for product recalls. A National SAFE KIDS checklist form must be completed for each child safety seat inspected.

Inspectors/Technicians - Nationally certified child passenger safety technicians perform the inspections. The technician's main role is as an educator. He/she is responsible for the inspection of the safety seat, instruction to the parent/caregiver on how to properly install the seat and secure the child, and deciding whether or not to replace a seat. In addition, the technician should also insure that any "bad" seats are disposed of (to prevent further use).

Training and Retraining

National certification can address the liability concerns often raised when discussing child seat inspections. While no one can guarantee freedom from the possibility of litigation, by following the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's standardized training and technician certification, you are provided with some assurances of technical competency. Your organization's general liability policy regarding staff and volunteers should be researched prior to submitting an application.

Individuals checking child safety seats must be trained to inspect the seats and effectively discuss and demonstrate proper installation techniques to caregivers. It is essential that all technicians are kept up-to-date. A technical update is held annually in Nebraska. Inspection stations are required to have at least one Technician attend the annual Technical Update.

Additional Resources and Supplies

National SAFE KIDS Checklist Form

http://www.safekidsnebraska.org/files/CPS_Forms/SafeKids_Checklist_2Generic_Final.pdf

Child Restraint Recalls: <https://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq/index.cfm>

Child Safety Seat Registration Form: www.transportation.nebraska.gov/nohs/pdf/CPSregfrm.pdf

Child Safety Seat Questionnaire Form:

www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/childseat.cfm#PARTC

Inspection Station Monthly Activity Log:

<http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/nohs/pdf/CPSActLog.pdf>

Manufacturer Instruction CDs:

www.carseat.org/Resources/101_resources.pdf (fee involved)

Latch Manual: www.transportation.nebraska.gov/nohs/pdf/latch.pdf

Materials Order Form: www.transportation.nebraska.gov/nohs/pdf/materials.pdf

Items to Purchase

Clipboards for check forms	Pens	File Folders
Scale	Tape Measure	Water/Pool Noodles
Knife to cut water noodles	Grip Liner	
Heavy Duty Locking Clips (belt shortening clips)-Auto dealerships		

Safety Belt Policy/Drug Free Workplace Policy

All applications must include a copy of your organization's drug-free workplace policy and safety belt use policy.